

And first, by Peter, as I wene,
The Pope himself we wolden mene,
And eek the seculers comprehendre,
That Cristes lawe wol defende,
And shulde it kepen and mayntenen
Ayeines hem that al sustenen,
And falsly to the puple techen.
And Johan bitokeneth hem that prechen,
That ther nis lawe covenable
But thilke Gospel Perdurable,
That fro the Holy Gost was sent
To turne folk that been miswent.
The strengthe of Johan they undirstonde
The grace in which, they seye, they stonde,
That doth the sinful folk converte,
And hem to Jesus Crist reverte.

All many another horriblete
May men in that boke see,
That ben comaunded, douteles,
Ayens the lawe of Rome expres;
And alle with Antecrist they holden,
As men may in the book biholden.
And than comaunden they to sleen
Alle tho that with Peter been;
But they shal nevere have that might,
And, God toforn, for stryf to fight,
That they ne shal ynough men finde
That Peters lawe shal have in minde,
And ever holde, and so mayntene,
That at the last it shal be sene
That they shal alle come therto,
for ought that they can speke or do.
And thilke lawe shal not stonde,
That they by Johan have undirstonde;
But, maugre hem, it shal adoun,
And been brought to confusioun.
But I wol stinte of this matere,
for it is wonder long to here;
But hadde that ilke book endured,
Of better estate I were ensured;
And freendis have I yit, pardee,
That han me set in greet degree.

Of all this world is emperour
Gyle my fader, the trechour,
And emperesse my moder is,
Maugre the Holy Gost, ywis.
Our mighty linage and our route
Regneth in every regne aboute;
And wel is worth we maistres be,
for al this world governe we,
And can the folk so wel disceyve,
That noon our gyle can perceyve;
And though they doon, they dar not
saye;
The sothe dar no wight biwreie.
But he in Cristis wrath him ledeth,
That more than Crist my bretheren
dredeth.

He nis no ful good champioun,
That dredith such simulacioun;
Nor that for payne wole refusen
As to correcten and accusen.

He wol not entremete by right,
Ne have God in his eyesight,
And therefore God shal him punyce;
But me ne rekketh of no vyce,
Sithen men us loven comunably,
And holden us for so worthy,
That we may folk repreve echoun,
And we nil have repref of noon.
Whom shulden folk worshipen so
But us, that stinten never mo
To patren whyl that folk us see,
Though it not so bihinde hem be?

AND where is more wood folye,
Than to enhance chivalrye,
And love noble men and gay,
That joly clothis weren alway?
If they be sich folk as they semen,
So clene, as men her clothis demen,
And that her wordis folowe her dede,
It is gret pite, out of drede,
for they wol be noon ypocritis!
Of hem, me thinketh it gret spite is;
I can not love hem on no syde.
But Beggars with these hodes wyde,
With sleight and pale faces lene,
And greye clothis not ful clene,
But fretted ful of tatarwagges,
And highe shoes, knopped with dagges,
That frouncen lyke a quaille/pype,
Or botes riving as a gype;
To such folk as I you devyse
Shuld princes and these lordes wyse
Take alle her londes and her thinges,
Bothe werre and pees, in governinges;
To such folk shulde a prince him yive,
That wolde his lyf in honour live.
And if they be not as they seme,
That serven thus the world to queme,
There wolde I dwelle, to disceyve
The folk, for they shal not perceyve.

BUT I ne speke in no such wyse,
That men shulde humble abit
dispyse,
So that no pryde therunder be.
No man shulde hate, as thinketh me,
The pore man in sich clothing.
But God ne preiseth him nothing,
That seith he hath the world forsake,
And hath to worldly glorie him take,
And wol of sicche delyces use;
Who may that Begger wel excuse?
That papelard, that him yeldeth so,
And wol to worldly ese go,
And seith that he the world hath left,
And gredily it grypeth eft.
He is the hound, shame is to seyn,
That to his casting goth ageyn.

BUT unto you dar I not lye:
But mighte I felen or aspye,
That ye perceyved it nothing,
Ye shulden have a stark lesing
Right in your hond thus, to biginne,

I nolde it lette for no sinne.

HE god lough at the wonder tho,
And every wight gan laughe also,
And seide: Lo here a man aright
for to be trusty to every wight!

ALIS/SEMBLANT, quod Love,
sey to me,
Sith I thus have avaunced thee,
That in my court is thy dwelling,
And of ribaundes shalt be my king,
Wolt thou wel holden my for-

wardis?
fals/Semblant.

Sir, from hennes forwardis;
Hadde never your fader herebiforn
Gervant so trewe, sith he was born.
Amour. That is ayeines al nature.

fals/Semblant.

IK, put you in that aventure;
for though ye borowes take of me,
The siherer shal ye never be
for ostages, ne sikimesse,
Or chartres, for to bere witnessse.
I take yourself to record here,
That men ne may, in no manere,
Teren the wolf out of his hyde,
Til he be flayn, bak and syde,
Though men him bete and al defyle;
What? wene ye that I wole bigyle?
for I am clothed mekely,
Therunder is al my trechery;
Myn herte chaungeth never the mo
for noon abit, in which I go.
Though I have chere of simplenesse,
I am not wery of shrewednesse.
My lemman, Streyned/Abstinence,
hath mister of my purveaunce;
She hadde ful longe ago be deed,
Nere my councel and my reed;
lete hir alone, and you and me.

Streyned/
Abstinence

AND Love answerde: I truste thee
Without borowe, for I wol noon.
And fals/Semblant, the theef,

Right in that ilke same place,
That hadde of tresoun al his face
Right blak withinne, and whyt withoute,
Chanketh him, gan on his knees loute.

HAN was ther nought, but
Every man
Now to assaut, that sailen
can,
Quod Love, and that ful
hardily.

Than armed they hem comunly
Of sich armour as to hem fel.
Than they were armed, fers and fel,
They wente hem forth, alle in a route,
And set the castel al aboute;
They wil nought away, for no drede,
Til it so be that they ben dede,
Or til they have the castel take.

And foure batels they gan make,
And parted hem in foure anoon,
And toke her way, and forth they goon,
The foure gates for to assaile,
Of whiche the keepers wol not faile;
for they ben neither syke ne dede,
But hardy folk, and strong in dede.

AWole I seyn the counte-
naunce
Of fals/Semblant, and
Abstinence,
That ben to Wikkid/Tonge
went.

But first they helde her parlement,
Whether it to done were
To maken hem be knowen there,
Or elles walken forth disgysed.
But at the laste they devysed,
That they wold goon in tapinage,
As it were in a pilgrimage,
Lyk good and holy folk unfeyned.
And Dame Abstinence/Streyned
Took on a robe of camelyne,
And gan hir graithe as a Begyne.
A large coverchief of threde
She wrapped al aboute hir hede,
But she forgat not hir sautere;
A peire of bedis eek she bere
Upon a lace, al of whyt threde,
On which that she hir bedes bede;
But she ne boughte hem never a del,
for they were geven her, I wot wel,
God wot, of a ful holy frere,
That seide he was hir fader dere,
To whom she hadde ofter went
Than any frere of his covent.
And he visyted hir also,
And many a sermoun seide hir to;
He nolde lette, for man on lyve,
That he ne wolde hir ofte shryve.
And with so gret devocion
They maden her confession,
That they had ofte, for the nones,
Two hedes in one hood at ones.

Of fair shape I devyse her thee,
But pale of face somtyme was
she;

That false traitouresse untrew
Was lyk that salowe hors of hewe,
That in the Apocalips is shewed,
That signifyeth tho folk beshrewed,
That been al ful of trecherye;
And pale, thurgh hypocrisye;
for on that hors no colour is,
But only deed and pale, ywis.
Of suche a colour enlangoured
Was Abstinence, ywis, coloured;
Of her estat she her repented,
As her visage represented.

SHE had a burdoun al of Thefte,
That Gyle had yeve her of his
yefte;